

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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R 131730Z DEC 73

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1514

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

S E C R E T PARAMARIBO 0466

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NS

SUBJECT: VHP ASKS U.S. TO INTERCEDE WITH DUTCH

1. SUMMARY. A VHP REPRESENTATIVE, S.D. TEWARI, HAS EXPRESSED TO THE CONSUL GENERAL HIS PARTY'S ALARM OVER THE FORTHCOMING APPOINTMENT OF A PNR MEMBER AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND POLICE. HE HAS REQUESTED THE U.S. TO INTERVENE WITH THE DUTCH TO ENSURE THE CONTINUANCE OF THE NETHERLANDS ARMY REINFORCED BATTALION IN SURINAM FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER TWO YEARS. TEWARI SAID HE EXPECTS THE INCOMING NPK-COALITION TO BREAK UP WITHIN SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR, AFTER WHICH THE PERIOD OF DANGER WOULD BE OVER. TEWARI'S EVALUATION IS BASICALLY CORRECT. THE POST BELIEVES IT TO BE IN THE U.S. INTEREST THAT THE GON'S INTENTIONS REGARDING THE BATTALION TO BE DETERMINED AND, IF NECESSARY, THAT THE GON BE URGED TO CONTINUE THE FORCE IN PLACE IN THE INTERESTS OF STABILITY. END SUMMARY.

2. UPON MY RETURN FROM THE BOGOTA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE MR. S.D. TEWARI REQUESTED AN URGENT APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS A CONFIDENTIAL MATTER. TEWARI IS A WEALTHY, RETIRING HINDUSTANI BUSINESSMAN IN HIS EARLY SIXTIES AND IS A CLOSE CRONY AND ADVISOR OF VHP CHAIRMAN J. LACHMON.

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3. TEWARI EXPLAINED HE HAD BEEN SENT BY LACHMON TO

DISCUSS A SENSITIVE MATTER SINCE IT WAS ADVISABLE THAT LACHMON NOT HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH ME AT THIS TIME. LACHMON WANTED TO REQUEST U.S. INTERVENTION WITH THE DUTCH TO KEEP THEIR REINFORCED INFANTRY BATTALION IN SURINAM FOR ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO. THE VHP, TEWARI SAID, IS VERY CONCERNED OVER THE IMMINENT APPOINTMENT OF A PNR MAN AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND POLICE. THEY BELIEVE THAT ONCE HE IS IN POSITION HE WILL PROCEED TO EASE OR FORCE OUT POLICE OFFICIALS NOT FRIENDLY TOWARD THE PNR AND WILL REPLACE THEM WITH PNR TYPES. IF AT THE SAME TIME HOLLAND WERE TO DECIDE TO WITHDRAW ITS MILITARY FORCE AS A PRELUDE TO SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE, PERHAPS AT THE UNOFFICIAL PROMPTING OF THE GOS, THE COUNTRY'S ONLY REMAINING ARMED AND DISCIPLINED FORCE WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY THE PNR. THIS WOULD PLACE THAT PARTY, CONTINUED TEWARI, WHOSE POLICIES ARE INIMICAL TO BOTH U.S. AND HINDUSTANI INTERESTS, IN A POSITION TO EFFECT A POWER GRAB OR AT LEAST TO EXERCISE GREAT INFLUENCE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. THIS THREAT HOWEVER WAS TRANSITORY BECAUSE THE VHP EXPECTED THE NPK COALITION TO BREAK UP AND THE GOVERNMENT TO FALL WITHIN A YEAR, WHEREUPON IT WOULD BE REPLACED BY A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE VHP WOULD PARTICIPATE. BUT TO GET THROUGH THE PERIOD OF DANGER IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ASSURE THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE DUTCH BATTALION.

4. I EMPHASIZED TO TEWARI THE U.S. POSITION ON NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. QUESTIONED ON THE EXPECTED BREAKUP AND FALL OF THE NPK-COALITION GOVERNMENT, HE SAID THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD ALMOST IMMEDIATELY FACE SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SOLVE, SUCH AS PRICE RISES, SHORTAGES, AND LABOR UNREST. HE ALSO ALLUDED TO THE FACT THAT THE VHP HAS A CERTAIN EXPERIENCE IN SPLITTING COALITIONS.

5. FYI. TEWARI REPORTEDLY WAS THE MAN WHO, ACTING ON BEHALF OF LACHMON, ENGINEERED THE FALL OF THE PENGEL GOVERNMENT IN 1969. IN EARLY 1969 PRIME MINISTER JOHAN PENGEL, THEN SURINAM'S POLITICAL STRONG MAN AND HEAD OF NPS, WAS FACED BY PERSISTENT TEACHER-LED STRIKES AND LABOR UNREST. UNABLE TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE ON ACCEPTABLE TERMS HE DECIDED ON A COURSE DESIGNED TO FRUSTRATE HIS

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ADVERSARIES. HE RESIGNED, KNOWING THAT, AS HEAD OF A MAJORITY IN THE STATEN, THE GOVERNOR WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO REAPPOINT PENGEL AS HEAD OF A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT TO ORGANIZE NEW ELECTIONS. PENGEL WOULD THUS HAVE DEFUSED THE STRIKE ISSUE SINCE HIS CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE EMPOWERED TO GRANT THE STRIKE DEMANDS. HE ALSO EXPECTED TO INCREASE HIS STRENGTH THROUGH THE ELECTIONS, AS IT WOULD BE ORGANIZED UNDER HIS ADMINISTRATION.

HOWEVER, GOVERNOR FERRIER (WHO IS STILL IN OFFICE) DELAYED IN MAKING AN APPOINTMENT. THE DELAY WAS LONG AND INEXPLICABLE. THEN, WITH LITTLE WARNING, THE AKTIE GROEP, A SMALL HINDUSTANI PARTY ALLIED WITH PENGEL AND WHICH HELPED PROVIDE HIS STATEN MAJORITY, BROKE FROM THE COALITION. THE GOVERNOR THEN APPOINTED A CABINET OF BUSINESSMEN AND TECHNICIANS, AND IN THE ELECTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE NPS LOST ITS POSITION AS LEADING PARTY TO THE VHP AND WENT INTO THE OPPOSITION, TO EMERGE ONLY NOW. TEWARI REPORTEDLY IS THE MAN WHO BROUGHT THE AKTIE GROEP OUT OF THE COALITION, USING A COMBINATION OF MONEY AND PROMISES OF POLITICAL REWARDS, AND WHO COORDINATED MATTERS WITH THE GOVERNOR. END FYI.

6. TEWARI'S OPINIONS ON THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING THE NEXT GOVERNMENT AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SPLIT ARE SHARED BY MANY OTHER LOCAL OBSERVERS. THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK IS INDEED GRIM AND THE COALITION IS RIVEN BY MANY DIFFERENCES WHICH WILL PROBABLY BECOME GREATER WHEN THE COALITION BEGINS TO GOVERN. MOREOVER, IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT LACHMON IS ACTIVELY EXPLORING WAYS IN WHICH DIVISIONS IN THE COALITION CAN BE EXPLOITED AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INCREASED. IT IS TOO SOON TO SAY WHEN OR WHETHER THIS WILL RESULT IN A SPLIT IN THE COALITION BUT THE LIKELIHOOD SEEMS AT LEAST FAIR.

7. TEWARI'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IS ESSENTIALLY CORRECT. U.S. INTERESTS WILL BE JEOPARDIZED IF DUTCH TROOPS ARE WITHDRAWN WHILE THE PNR CONTROLS THE POLICE. STABILITY WILL BE UNDERMINED AND THE COUNTRY'S GROWTH PROSPECTS WILL BE ENDANGERED AS A RESULT OF A WORSENERD INVESTMENT CLIMATE, WHICH WOULD ENSUE. I RECOMMEND THAT, ONCE THE APPOINTMENT OF A PNR MAN TO JUSTICE AND POLICE

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IS OFFICIAL, THE GON'S GENERAL VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT BE DETERMINED, AND IN PARTICULAR ITS INTENTIONS REGARDING THE BATTALION. IF THE GON APPEARS SOFT ON THE SUBJECT OF KEEPING THE BATTALION IN PLACE, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BATTALION'S CONTINUED PRESENCE TO SURINAM'S CONTINUED S\*ABILITY AND GROWTH SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED TO THE GON. IT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND THAT THE VHP WILL PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO USE OTHER CHANNELS TO GET THEIR MESSAGE TO THE DUTCH, INCLUDING DIRECT CONTACT.

JOHNSTON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY ASSISTANCE, POLITICAL STABILITY, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, OPPOSITION PARTIES, POLICE FORCES, SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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